

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ASUNCI 00188 132031Z

53

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6511

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, PA

SUBJ: CHASE SRADI

REF: STATE 007213, ASUNCION 0027

1. CHASE SARDI'S SITUATION REMAINS ABOUT AS REPORTED IN ASUNCION 27. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO STATE 7213, FOR USE IN ANSWERING PRESS INQUIRIES:

A. GOP AJRE OF US INTEREST. THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE GOP AT SEVERAL LEVELS (INCLUDING MINISTERIAL) TO ENSURE THAT THE GOP IS AWARE OF US CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC CONCERN OVER CHASE'S ARREST BECAUSE OF HIS PROMINENT ROLE IN INDIAN AFFAIRS. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING OPIS IS A MATTER OF EXCLUSIVE PARAGUAYAN COMPETENCE, WE HAVE URGED THE GOP TO BRING CHASE BEFORE A JUDGE AND FORMALLY CHARGE HIM, IF THERE IS EVIDENCE OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.

B. REASON FOR CHASE'S ARREST. GOP AUTHORITIES HAVE ASSURED US CHASE'S ARREST HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH HIS ROLE AS THE DIRECTOR OF PROJECT MARANDU, ONE OF OPE MOST IMPORTANT INDIAN WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS IN PARAGUAY. RATHER, CHASE WAS ARRESTED BECAUSE OF ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT WITH THE ILLEGAL COMMUNIST PARTY, IN A RECENT SWEEP OF COMMUNIST ELEMENTS BELIEVED BY THE GOP TO BE INVOLVED IN SUBVERSIVE PLOTTING. HIS ARREST IS A MATTER OF PUBLIC RECORD; THE AUTHORITIES HAVE NOT INFORMED

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PAGE 02 ASUNCI 00188 132031Z

US WHETHER OR WHEN HE MAY BE RELEASED, OR IF HE IS TO BE

BROUGHT TO TRIAL, WHEN THAT WILL TAKE PLACE.

C. MARANDU STILL HAS OFFICIAL BLESSING. OUR CONTACTS WITH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OFFICIALS WHO HAVE THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOP INDIAN WELFARE PROGRAMS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT HR ARREST OF CHASE FOR SUSPECTED SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES WAS NOT DIRECTED AGAINST PROJECT MARANDU ITSELF, WHICH THEY SAY STILL HAS OFFICIAL BLESSING. THE SAME OFFICIALS ALSO TELL US THAT THE ARREST DOES NOT SIGNAL ANY CHANGE WHATSOEVER IN THE GOP'S POLICY OF STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE COUNTRY'S UNASSIMILATED INDIANS.

D. CHASE'S PHYSICAL CONDITION. WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH A MEMBER OF CHASE'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY (HIS WIFE) WHO REPORTS THAT SHE IS ABLE TO VISIT CHASE, THAT HE IS WELL, AND THAT HIS LIVING CONDITIONS (IN PRISON) ARE REASONABLY SATISFACTORY.

2. DEPT'S 301981 REFERS TO GERMAN ANTHROPOLOGIST MARK MUNZEL AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON CHASE SARDI. DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE AWARE FROM PREVIOUS

EMBASSY REPORTS (E.E. A-23, APRIL 1, 1974) THAT MUNZEL AND HIS WIFE WERE EXPELLED FROM PARAGUAY IN 1972 AMIDST MUTUAL RECRIMINATION. THE CONDITIONS OF THE INDIANS WHICH HE DESCRIBED PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE MORE THAN THREE YEARS AGO HAVE IMPROVED CONSIDERABLY, DUE TO A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE BY THE GOP (CAREFULLY NURTURED BY THE EMBASSY).
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